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No. 108

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

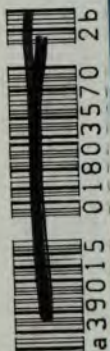
OF

THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST  
COMMISSION.

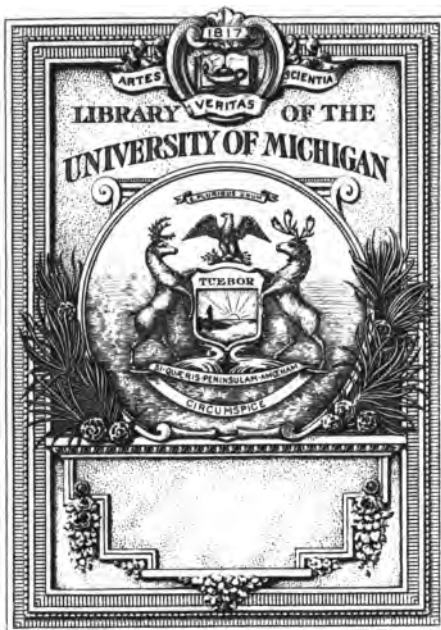
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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

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## FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST COMMISSION.

At the end of the period of four years and a half, for which the General Court, by chapter 720 of the Acts of the year 1914, made its appropriation to purchase waste lands to be planted as forests, it is our duty and privilege to report a summary of what we have done.

The Commonwealth has acquired by purchase four areas, — one in Plymouth County, one in Essex County, one in Worcester County, and one in Berkshire County, and this year has acquired by gift another area in the southern portion of Berkshire County. The first contains 7,000 acres, and is in the towns of Plymouth and Carver, and has been named the Myles Standish State Forest for historical reasons; the second contains 1,200 acres, and is in the towns of North Reading, Andover and North Andover, and has been named the Harold Parker State Forest, in memory of the first chairman of the Commission; the third contains 1,700 acres, and is in the towns of Winchendon, Templeton and Royalston, and has been named the Otter River State Forest from the river which flows through it; the fourth contains 1,200 acres, and is in the town of Savoy, and has been named the Savoy Mountain State Forest; and the fifth contains 1,000 acres, and is in the town of Monterey, and has been named the Arthur Wharton Swann State Forest, in memory of the late husband of the generous donor, Mrs. Susan Ridley Sedgwick Swann of the city of New York. Upon all these areas, except the second, are one or more buildings, which came with the land without cost to the Commonwealth, and which are used for administration purposes. The average cost of the purchased areas is between \$3 and \$4 an acre.

These areas differ materially in topography, soil and growth. The Myles Standish State Forest is light and sandy, mostly

covered with scrub oaks, and has been burned over many times. The few old trees now remaining show that Scotch, red and white pines will attain good size. The Harold Parker State Forest is rolling and rocky land, adapted to both soft and hard woods. There are no ponds nor brooks in this area. The Otter River State Forest also is rolling in character, but is not rocky, and is adapted also to soft and hard woods. It is abundantly watered by the Otter and Miller rivers. The Savoy Mountain State Forest is on high land, 2,000 feet above sea level, where ashes, birches, spruces and firs will flourish. It has no ponds nor brooks. The Arthur Wharton Swann State Forest, unlike the four already mentioned, which are forests as yet only in prospect, is an actual forest, with fine, large chestnuts, oaks, spruces and pines. A mountain brook flows through it. For economical management these forests should be enlarged by gradual additions. With the consent of the Governor and Council takings have been had of the Myles Standish and Otter River State forests, so as to make certain the title of the Commonwealth within the lines of the outside boundaries.

These areas have not been developed as we had expected. The act provides for the purchase of the lands by the Commission and for their development by the State Forester. Unfortunately he has had no money for this purpose. Nevertheless considerable work has been done, though at the cost of the appropriation for the Commission. The buildings have been kept in repair; roads have been cleared of brush; and fire lines established and brush burned; and there has been a good deal of planting; but we felt that we ought not to spend in planting very much of the appropriations, which were intended primarily for the purchase of land. An inspection of the planting shows that 98 per cent. of the pines of all kinds are alive and doing well.

The Commonwealth is pursuing a wise policy in the purchase and development of these areas, in order that a continuous supply of timber may be secured. The fuel shortage has demonstrated our dependence upon our own forests, especially reinforced by the lessons of the war, which has made such inroads into the world supply of timber as imagination could

not have pictured. The forests of Europe have been almost destroyed, and the forests of the United States and of the Dominion of Canada have been cut to a very large extent. The demand for timber for pulp wood, railway ties, telegraph and telephone poles, manufacturing and chemical industries, will far exceed the supply for a long time to come. It is of pressing necessity, then, that preparation be made now, and this must be done by the Commonwealth itself. The burdens upon private capital will be so many that it will not be available for this purpose, even if it could afford to wait thirty to fifty years for a return. No man plants for himself but for posterity, and few are able to lock up their capital in an enterprise which will not yield its full return until it is inherited by the children or grandchildren of the present owners. Therefore the State must take the matter in hand, or probably it never will be done. The Commonwealth can do this, and meanwhile will furnish employment to its people. We can grow our lumber here for less than it costs to transport it from the south and west and from Canada.

Another consideration presses upon us at this time. Our soldiers and sailors will be returning in the near future from their service across the ocean. Some of them will fill their old places, but many of them must look for new employment, and some of them will not be able physically for many occupations. Our allies, notably Great Britain and its colonies, are making extensive plans for the public reclamation of waste lands. Here is the opportunity for the Commonwealth to be just and generous, and also to reap a profit. The manhood of our Commonwealth is its most precious asset. Death will claim a large proportion of our young men who in days of peace would have become the fathers of our race. It will be wise statesmanship, then, and no more than common gratitude, to take care of those who escape. Many can find permanent employment in road building, in fire-guard patrolling, in cutting of timber, and in planting, and those not equal physically to any of these occupations can be employed as forest rangers. It is possible, also, to establish upon areas of considerable size a woodworking shop where returned soldiers and sailors unfitted for outdoor labor can be employed. It is probable a still larger area can be acquired in southern Berk-



